St. Anthony

the Wonder Worker

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the Wonder-Worker

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Glorious St. Anthony, by the power
of your intercession with Jesus,
aid us in our
spiritual and temporal needs!

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Introduction

POPE LEO XIII called Saint Anthony of Padua "the saint of the whole world." Truly, he is the saint of all times and of all countries. His veneration is bounded neither by race nor creed. He possesses enthusiastic friends, devoted disciples and zealous clients among people of all nations. Few saints have wrought as many miracles during life and after death as has St. Anthony. On the day of his burial, which was a Tuesday, all the sick who approached his holy remains were cured of their ailments. Pope Gregory IX confirms this fact in the bull of canonization in which he styles St. Anthony "The great Wonder-Worker of the whole Church."

It is not only in important affairs that St. Anthony shows the power of his intercession, but also in the seemingly trivial occurrences of daily life. Especially does he merit the title of restorer of things lost. Oftentimes articles are lost or misplaced and, despite the most diligent search, cannot be found. The person confidently turns to St. Anthony, and the object is found in a manner that excludes all doubt as to the intervention of a higher power.

In his Brief of May 1, 1898, Pope Leo

XIII says: "In consequence of a special prerogative and favor from God, St. Anthony daily renders graces and benefits to Christian people, so much so, that Holy Church herself admonishes every Christian to have recourse to him if he wishes to see miracles: this is true especially of the finding of lost objects." If one were to collect all the available facts of this nature, the account would fill volumes. St. Anthony is also regarded as a special patron of the poor, of barren and pregnant women, and of travelers. Thus St. Anthony, as it were, lives and speaks continually to the whole Christian world.

The wonderful activity of the saint extends not only to material things, but likewise to the supernatural. His aid has been especially efficacious in obtaining the conversion of hardened sinners. Many persons promise aid for the poor if helped through the intercession of St. Anthony, and doubtless this is why their prayers are so often granted, because they imitate the active charity of this great lover of the poor. Those who open their hands to the needy attract to themselves the blessings of heaven. It is the will of God that we not only invoke the aid of St. Anthony, but that we likewise strive to conform our lives to his sublime example, particularly by our love for God, confidence in His mercy, simplicity of manners, purity of heart, charity toward the poor and apostolic zeal.

St. Anthony the Wonder-Worker

Humble Disciple of St. Francis

SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA was born in 1195 in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. In holy baptism he received the name "Ferdinand." His father, Martin de Boillion, was treasurer to the king, and his mother, a devout, humble woman named Mary, was descended from the noble lineage of Tavera. Both parents esteemed virtue more highly than nobility, and sought to give their son not so much a princely training as a truly Christian education. Under the supervision of the canons of the cathedral, Ferdinand applied himself earnestly to study, and made rapid progress in the sciences, as well as in the practice of Christian virtue.

As early as his fifteenth year, Ferdinand generously resolved to consecrate his life to the service of God in religion. He entered the Augustinian

Order in 1210. He spent ten years in the monastery in strict seclusion and severe mortification, devoting his brilliant mind to the study of theology, the Sacred Scriptures and the liturgy of the Church. He then learned of the newly-founded Franciscan Order and certain of its members who had recently been martyred for the Faith. In his heart burned the desire that, like them, he might carry the light of the Gospel into heathen lands, and if need be, die for the Faith. After many weeks of fervent prayer and serious reflection, he begged his superiors to allow him to join the Order of St. Francis. Permission was reluctantly given, and in 1220 Ferdinand exchanged the Augustinian habit for the brown habit of the Friars Minor. He was given the name of "Anthony." During his year of probation, which he spent in the isolated monastery of the holy Abbot Anthony near Coimbra, Anthony distinguished himself as a model of every virtue.

As he progressed in sanctity, his desire for martyrdom grew ever more intense. He desired nothing more ar-

dently than to go to Africa to preach the Gospel to the Moors. This permission was granted by his superiors, but Providence decreed that Anthony should bear testimony to God in Italy and France, where he converted innumerable souls to the Church.

Scarcely had Anthony arrived in Africa when he was attacked by a violent fever which forced him to return to his native land. On his return voyage, however, the vessel was shipwrecked and he finally landed in Sicily. He remained in Messina for some time; then, with some friars from Sicily, he journeyed to Assisi where St. Francis was about to hold a General Chapter. At its conclusion, the friars were appointed their particular spheres of activity.

Anthony was sent to Monte-Paolo, where he daily celebrated Holy Mass for the lay-brothers, as he had been ordered to do. He considered himself a useless friar, and gladly performed the lowliest tasks in the house, such as washing the dishes and sweeping the floors. He never betrayed his learning and talents so that his confreres con-

sidered him an uneducated, simple-minded, although pious man, capable of performing only the common services of the house. This was Anthony's delight, for he wished to be despised and unknown rather than to be esteemed and admired.

About this time, several of the Franciscan friars were sent to the Bishop of Forli to receive Holy Orders. Some Dominicans were to be ordained at the same time. Anthony had accompanied the superior of his monastery, who wished to be present for the sacred functions. The superior requested that one of the Dominican friars give an address appropriate to the solemn occasion, but no one was prepared to do so, and all declined the invitation. The superior then turned to Anthony and said: "Well, then, you speak and say whatever the Spirit of God may inspire."

Though it was a trial for his humility, Anthony obeyed. His words were simple, but he spoke with such fiery eloquence, such knowledge of Holy Scripture, and such learning, that all

were amazed. It seemed hardly possible that the sermon had been given without preparation; rather, one would have thought it to be a carefully prepared discourse. At once it became clear to all that Anthony was not the unlettered brother they had supposed him to be, but that the Spirit of God spoke through him.

After that the Provincial no longer permitted him to serve in the kitchen, but appointed him to preach throughout the province, as he had shown himself so well fitted for this office. When St. Francis heard of Anthony's powerful eloquence and his gift of touching hearts, he was filled with such joy that he commissioned the humble friar to preach at every opportunity.

Apostolic Preacher

St. Anthony now devoted himself with great success to preaching. The people came in crowds to hear his sermons and discourses, and God worked many miracles in favor of those who listened to him.

One time a woman was forbidden by her husband, an irreligious man, to attend a sermon preached by St. Anthony. She therefore went upstairs, seated herself near the window, and there heard the sermon as plainly as if she had been at the place where the saint was preaching, although she was about four miles distant. She told her husband of this, and he himself later experienced the same miracle, was converted, and after that listened attentively to the Word of God from the lips of St. Anthony.

Another woman, in order to attend one of his sermons left a small child alone at home. While she was listening to the preacher, the child accidentally fell into a kettle of boiling water. Naturally the child would have been scalded to death, but God preserved him from all harm. When the mother returned, she found her son playing in the boiling water as if he were in a refreshing bath.

A third woman found, upon returning home from a sermon, that her child had died in his cradle. Instantly she

returned to the holy preacher and implored his help. Anthony addressed to her the words spoken by Our Lord to the centurion: "Go thy way, thy son lives." The woman believed his word, and on reaching home, found the child playing with his companions.

The most striking of all Saint Anthony's miracles are in relation to his sermons. Perhaps one of the best known is his sermon to the fishes, which occurred most probably in the year 1227, when Anthony left home, traversing various cities and preaching the Word of God. On this journey he also came to Rimini, a town of Romagna on the Adriatic Sea.

In the town there were many who clung tenaciously to the Albigensian heresy and would not be converted by mere words. Anthony assembled all the inhabitants of the place and began with zeal and eloquence to refute the heretical errors and to admonish the people to do penance. However, no one would heed his words; on the contrary, the people laughed at him and ridiculed him. He then went to the seashore and

called the fishes to come and listen to the word of God, which men despised. Instantly the fishes came to the shore, ranged themselves in perfect order, according to their kind and size, to hear the sermon preached by the saint.

According to his custom, Anthony cited various texts from Holy Scripture and explained their meaning to his mute listeners. He marveled at the goodness of the Creator who had appointed the water to be the abode of fishes, that clear transparent element in which they could find all that was necessary for food and shelter. In the deluge, he said, when all other creatures outside the ark had perished, they alone had been preserved by the Heavenly Father. He reminded them how they had been selected by God at various times for His service: a fish had swallowed Jonas and brought him to the shore destined by God, that he might carry out the divine orders and preach penance; a fish had brought the coin with which our Savior paid the tribute for Himself and Peter. Shortly before His ascension, Jesus had par-

taken of fish as a proof of His human nature and of His resurrection from the dead. By these and many other examples, Anthony reminded these lowly creatures of the sea how much they were indebted to their kind Creator. Then the fishes, large and small, bowed their heads, whereupon St. Anthony dismissed them with his blessing.

Converter of Sinners

Leonardo, a young man of Padua, confessed to St. Anthony that he had brutally kicked his mother with such force as to cause her to fall to the ground. Anthony, wishing to impress upon the youth the gravity of the misdeed, said: "The foot that strikes father or mother deserves to be cut off." The boy went home and cut off his foot.

The report of this cruel, self-inflicted punishment soon spread through the city and also reached the ears of the saint. Immediately Anthony hastened to the young man, prayed over him, took the severed foot, held it to the injured leg and made the Sign of

the Cross over it. Instantly it was healed and the youth had the perfect use of his limb as before.

Another man was touched by one of the saint's sermons, and so filled with contrition for his hitherto sinful life that he went to the saint immediately after the sermon, threw himself at St. Anthony's feet and begged leave to confess his sins. Anthony received him with great gentleness and compassion; but the man was so grieved over his sins, and sobbed so violently that he was unable to accuse himself properly. Anthony therefore bade him go home and write his sins. The contrite penitent did as he was commanded, and with all exactitude committed the long list of transgressions to paper. This he brought to St. Anthony, who read it and gave him absolution. Then the saint returned the paper to its owner, but behold! not a trace of the writing was visible. The absolution had not only washed off the invisible stains of sin from the soul, but had likewise blotted out the accusation written on the paper. This miracle proved the

genuine sincerity of the sinner's conversion and the intensity of his sorrow for the sins he had committed, since God deigned to console him in so striking a manner.

Restorer of Things Lost

Besides the office of preacher, Anthony also exercised the office of professor of theology in Montpellier, France, his duty being to instruct the young friars in that science. At this time a remarkable incident occurred among the pupils. Anthony treasured a book containing the psalms, together with an explanation of them, compiled by himself and written with his own hand. The art of printing had not yet been invented, and the compiling of "books" in those days meant careful, laborious copying by hand on parchment. A novice, tired of the religious life, left the monastery, taking Anthony's book with him. The saint was much grieved over the theft. The sin and the endangered salvation of the unhappy novice, however, saddened him

more than the loss of the book, although the book had been very useful to him and almost indispensable to his teaching.

Anthony retired to pray, entreating the divine mercy to have compassion on the unhappy youth, and to restore the book to him. *God immediately answered the trustful prayer of His faithful servant.* When the youth came to a bridge which he wished to cross, he was confronted by a terrifying apparition which threateningly ordered him to carry back the stolen manuscript.

Horrified, the *novice immediately returned to the monastery, contrite and humble. He threw himself at the feet of the saint, implored his forgiveness and gave back the book.* So great was the impression made on him by the marvelous apparition that he begged to be received back into the Order. St. Anthony, filled with compassion, forgave the penitent novice, and in his heart returned fervent thanks to God. At the same time the saint warned the young man against the snares of the

devil and encouraged him to persevere in the divine service.

It is believed that this miraculous restoration of the lost manuscript gave rise to the *practice of invoking St. Anthony for the recovery of things lost or misplaced.*

Lover of the Blessed Sacrament

Saint Anthony valiantly defended the mystery of the Holy Eucharist against attacks of unbelievers. As a reward for his fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, God once distinguished His faithful servant by an extraordinary miracle. On a certain occasion when Anthony was preaching against the Albigenses, he became engaged in an animated dispute about the Blessed Sacrament with a leader of the heretical sect. Anthony easily answered every question and refuted every objection. The heretic, though baffled, was not convinced. Turning to St. Anthony he said: *"If you are able to prove in presence of the people that Jesus Christ is really present in the consecrated Host,*

I will abjure all heresy and accept the Catholic Faith."

Anthony, with firm trust in God, accepted the challenge. "Listen, then," said the heretic. "I have a mule which I will shut up without food. After three days I will bring it to this place and put a measure of oats before it. And you, Anthony, bring before the animal at the same time what you call the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. If the starved beast *ignores the food and prostrates before its God, who you say should be adored by every creature, I will believe.*"

The heretics applauded the speaker, feeling certain of victory. Anthony in fervent prayer awaited the time set for the trial. At dawn of the appointed day, an unusually great throng of Catholics and heretics assembled in the public square, awaiting the outcome of the proposed challenge.

Nearby, in a little chapel, St. Anthony offered Holy Mass with fervent devotion. *The heretic then appeared with his mule, which had been decorated with garlands. At the same mo-*

ment, Anthony came forward with the Sacred Host. Breathless silence ensued; it was a moment of intense suspense. With a loud voice, the saint addressed the animal: "In the Name and in the power of your Creator, whom, despite my unworthiness, I bear in my hands, I command you to come instantly and bow humbly before Him." At the same moment a measure of oats was placed before the mule. Marvelous to relate the mute beast showed no desire for the food; obeying the voice of the saint, it got down on its knees in adoration of the Holy Sacrament!

The Catholics broke forth in jubilation; the Albigenses were filled with amazement; the owner of the beast declared himself vanquished; he abjured his errors and became a faithful son of Holy Church.

Fervent Client of Mary

Lovers of St. Anthony are rejoiced to know that this saint was a great favorite and devoted client of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His mother had received

him through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, and had given him birth on the feast of the Assumption. While he was still a babe in the cradle, his mother taught him to pronounce the holy names of Jesus and Mary. As soon as he was able to walk, he found his delight in visiting the altars of the Blessed Virgin.

The church which stood beside the palace of his parents was dedicated to the Mother of God. It was in this church that, in the presence of his parents, little Ferdinand (as he was called at baptism) made the vow of perpetual chastity when only five years of age. Here the boy was often found upon his knees before the image of the Heavenly Mother singing "Hail, O Glorious Queen," a hymn which his mother had taught him. This song which so readily came to his lips in childhood was also his delight in after years. He sang it by day and night; it comforted him in sorrow, strengthened him in combats and led him on to victory in his great apostolic labors. Just before expiring,

Anthony intoned this favorite hymn to the Queen of Heaven.

Saint Anthony's sermons on the Blessed Virgin were masterpieces. His extraordinary devotion to the Mother of God was manifested by words, clear and affectionate, fervent and tender. Having been born on the feast of the Assumption, the saint was especially devoted to this mystery of Our Lady's life and it grieved him deeply to hear anyone deny the doctrine of her bodily assumption into heaven.

At one time, while preaching in France, St. Anthony was favored with a marvelous vision of the holy Mother of God. On the eve of the Assumption he was tenderly meditating in his cell on the great glory of the Blessed Virgin, who, having been received with body and soul into heaven, there reigns with Jesus, her Divine Son. Suddenly the Queen of glory appeared to him, beautiful and resplendent with light. She assured him that God had indeed received her with body and soul into heaven, and that he could preach this doctrine without fear.

A Lover of Poverty

St. Anthony was a lover of poverty. During his apostolic life, he was frequently in extreme need; everything was wanting to him except the courage and love of God.

While St. Anthony was in the monastery at Brive, France, it happened one day that the brother-cook had no food to give the friars. He complained to St. Anthony, who in turn asked a charitable woman to take pity on them and send them a few vegetables. The weather was disagreeable and rain fell in torrents. So great was the woman's esteem for the saint, however, and so great her pity for the friars, that notwithstanding the rain she told her servant to bring some vegetables from the garden. The maid obeyed, took from the garden what she deemed necessary for the friars, carried it to the monastery and returned home. *During all this time the rain had not ceased to fall, yet neither the clothing nor the shoes of the maid had become wet.* "When there is question of rendering a service to Fa-

ther Anthony or his friars, you can send me even to the ends of the earth," the servant said to her mistress upon her return. "Though it should rain pitchforks, I would not fear, because they would not harm me." With these words she pointed to her dress and shoes which were perfectly dry; not one drop of rain had fallen on them. This served to increase the love and esteem of the generous benefactress for the poor friars. Her only son, Peter, was a canon at Noblet. To him she earnestly recommended the poor sons of St. Francis, urging him to support them with alms as much as possible, and assuring him that God would repay him. Her son faithfully complied with the wishes of his devout mother, and was fond of relating the miracle she had witnessed concerning the rain.

Labors in Italy

In the spring of 1227, St. Anthony was elected Provincial of Romagna, which embraces the greater part of upper Italy. This province, which a few

years previously he had entered as a humble lay-brother, now became the scene of his apostolic labors and astounding miracles. He was then but thirty-two years of age and had been a member of the Franciscan Order only seven years.

In Gemona, Italy, Anthony's sermons were eagerly attended. Seeing the good disposition of the people, Anthony began to build a chapel in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and a monastery for the Brothers. A certain incident related in connection with this work is well adapted to strike fear into the hearts of those who make light of serious matters.

Anthony needed help to haul the required building material. He met a farmer with a yoke of oxen hitched to a wagon and asked the man to help him with the work for the love of God. The farmer refused, saying he had the corpse of a youth on the wagon. The youth, however, was only sleeping, or simply pretending to be asleep. The farmer drove on. After a while he went to awaken the boy, but despite all his

calling, tugging and shaking, he could not rouse him. To his great consternation, the farmer discovered that the boy had actually died.

With loud lamentations, the man hastened back to the saint, confessed his fault amid tears, and entreated him to obtain the youth's restoration to life, since God had given him so great power. Anthony went to the wagon, made the Sign of the Cross over the corpse, at the same time calling upon the Divine assistance most fervently with heart and lips... Almighty God answered the prayer of His faithful servant, for instantly the youth arose. It may well be imagined that thereafter not only the grateful farmer, but all the inhabitants of the city were eager to help with the erection of the house of God.

In Gemona, where this incident took place, a chapel of the saint may still be seen, and his memory is held in high veneration.

In 1227, St. Anthony visited Padua for the first time. This city, with which he was to be inseparably identified through succeeding centuries, he found

torn by violent religious dissensions. Schisms and immorality had likewise infected many. Nevertheless, the sermons of the saint were well attended and crowned with remarkable success. Wonderful conversions took place, and a reformation of the corrupt morals was soon effected. The unction with which St. Anthony announced the word of God was simply overpowering. Heaven richly blessed his labors. Soon the fame of his sanctity and of his wonderful achievements spread throughout the city and people flocked to hear him.

During Lent of the following year, 1228, Anthony preached a series of Lenten sermons in Padua. His labors were blessed with the most salutary effects. Families which for years had lived in deadly enmity were reconciled at his word; persons who had been a scandal to the city now made restitution of unlawful gains.

Remembering the good will and generosity with which formerly he had been received in Padua, and also the great good his sermons had effected there, St. Anthony later returned to the

monastery of the Friars Minor in that city. It was probably in the fall of the year 1230. He was then about thirty-five years old.

Venerator of the Child Jesus

St. Anthony lived in intimate union with Our Lord and His Blessed Mother. He venerated most tenderly the mysteries of the incarnation and the sacred infancy of the Eternal Word, and thus won for himself the favor of sweet intercourse with the Child Jesus. It is with the Child Jesus that St. Anthony is most frequently represented. One of his visions of the Divine Infant has been described by an eyewitness.

During the lifetime of St. Anthony, there lived in Padua a nobleman called Tiso, who always extended friendly hospitality to the saint on his preaching tours. It was probably in the year 1229, when St. Anthony had again accepted the kind offer to spend a few days in retirement at Tiso's castle. One night when Tiso passed Anthony's room, he saw rays of light issuing from under the

door. Impelled by curiosity, he peeped through the keyhole, and saw to his amazement a Child of wondrous beauty standing on an open book of the Gospel which was lying on a little table, His tiny arms encircling the neck of the smiling Anthony.

Tiso also saw the flood of light which surrounded the Child and the unspeakable tenderness with which He caressed the saint and was in turn caressed by him, so that Tiso's own soul was enraptured. Was any further proof required that the ravishing form was that of the Divine Child of Bethlehem, who thus filled the chaste heart of His favored servant with supernatural bliss? A holy dread, however, came upon the daring observer when suddenly the beautiful Child pointed to the door and seemed to whisper something to St. Anthony. Tiso realized that he had been detected, but also that the charming Guest was not offended by his curiosity.

Tiso continued to gaze on the scene until the vision disappeared and darkness replaced the heavenly brightness.

Not until then did Tiso rise, to return to his apartment. Some moments later, Anthony threw open the door and folded his enraptured host in his embrace. The saint begged Tiso, for the love of Him whom he had just beheld, never to speak of this apparition to anyone during his lifetime. With deep emotion, Tiso promised, and it was not until after the saint's death that he related what he had seen on that memorable night. Whenever he related the vision, tears welled up in his eyes, and his heart thrilled with emotion.

No doubt our Divine Savior wished to reward Tiso for his generous hospitality to the poor Franciscan friar, by allowing him to be an eyewitness of one of His familiar colloquies with the humble religious. Tiso himself later left the world, renouncing all honors and his vast estate, to be clothed in the coarse sackcloth of the Franciscans. After some years of fidelity to the rule of his Order, he died a holy death two years after St. Anthony had entered into his eternal reward.

One day, after St. Anthony had finished his sermon and was hastening back to his monastery so as to escape the applause of his audience, a man named Pietro met him, carrying a sick child in his arms. The child was deformed in both feet and could move about only by crawling. He was also afflicted with epilepsy so that at times he fell to the floor like one dead, frothing at the mouth. The distressed father, full of confidence in the intercession of the holy preacher, cast himself at the saint's feet and besought him to make the Sign of the Cross on the child's forehead. Touched by the pleadings of the father, Anthony made a large Sign of the Cross over the child. Then the father returned home; he placed the child on his feet, and to his great joy the little one was able to walk with a crutch; soon after he needed only a cane for support and finally discarded the cane, being entirely healed of both lameness and epilepsy.

Another miraculous incident which, however, had a tragic ending, occurred in Florence, Italy. One of the ruling vices in that city, as in so many cities of our own day, was the practice of usury. Anthony had often denounced it from the pulpit, but conversions, as is the case with this vice, were rare. It happened that a very rich and avaricious usurer died, and Anthony was requested to deliver the funeral oration. God had revealed to Anthony that this man had been condemned on account of his avarice. For the text of his discourse the holy preacher chose the words of Our Lord, "Where thy treasure is, there thy heart also will be" (Matt. 6, 21). In the course of the sermon, he applied to the deceased the words which Our Lord had spoken of the miser: "The rich man died and was buried in hell" (Luke 16, 22). From this text he took occasion to portray the vice of avarice in all its hideousness, and then proved how the miser is an enemy not only of his fellowmen but

also of his own soul. "This man," he concluded, "whom you now bury was a miser and a usurer, and therefore he is now buried in hell, where he must suffer for all eternity."

It was but natural that all present were horrified at such words and began to show their displeasure. But what was their surprise when Anthony called out to them: "Go and see for yourselves; open the coffer in which he hoarded his treasures. You will find the heart of the unhappy one in the midst of his gold." These words created general consternation. After the sermon was concluded, several persons went to the house of the deceased in order to convince themselves of the truth of what had been said. They constrained the relatives to open the coffer, and to their horror, actually found the heart of the miser, still warm, in the midst of his money. Not yet satisfied, they hastened back to the church and examined the corpse. It was without a heart!

Model of Chastity

Not without good reason does Christian art represent St. Anthony with a lily in his hand. This is to indicate in a symbolic way that St. Anthony was like a lily; that one of the principal virtues that shone forth in his life was the virtue whose emblem is the lily — angelic purity, chastity, virginity. In the midst of the manifold temptations of this world, he edified all Christendom by a pure and spotless life, which remained untarnished until the end. The Holy Spirit enlightened him early in life, so that at the age of only five years he consecrated his virginity to the Mother of God. During his whole life he was like an angel in the flesh.

On account of his virginal chastity, Holy Church invokes him with the words: St. Anthony, lily of virginity, pray for us. Vessel of purity, pray for us. St. Anthony banishes the spirit of impurity. In virtue of the blessed lilies of St. Anthony, great graces, wonderful conversions and cures of bodily infirmities have been obtained.

In the course of centuries, many persons have adopted the practice of placing a blooming or even a withered lily in the hand of a statue of the saint. By repeated miracles, the blooming lilies not seldom have remained fresh for weeks and months, while withered lilies have bloomed again.

The clients of St. Anthony, too, should flourish as lilies in the beauty of purity and chastity, according to their state of life. Yes, through the intercession of St. Anthony, chastity will be preserved in souls. By his intercession God will even cause the broken lily of chastity to live and bloom again. Oh, how St. Anthony preaches to us by his lily-white purity in our times, when mankind is sunk in the mire of impurity, the vice which from the very beginning of time has populated hell! No virtue should be dearer to St. Anthony's friends than chastity, which makes man happy both in this life and in eternity. The beauty and prerogatives of chastity are so rare and so great that the Church Fathers have written volumes in its praise. Chastity ennobles the

body and imparts to it a charm of grace and beauty. But still more it elevates and ennobles the soul, makes it the queen of body and heart. Already in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit exclaimed: "Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation in glory; the memory thereof is immortal, for it is known both with God and with men" (Wis. 4, 1). Chaste souls are likewise the favorites of St. Anthony; for them he obtains the most marvelous graces.

Conqueror of Demons

With fiendish malignity and envy, the evil one looked upon the great success of St. Anthony's preaching. Always on the alert to oppose the works of God, Satan tried by his diabolical arts to hinder or frustrate the good effected by God through His servant.

St. Anthony had many encounters with the evil spirits. Their wrath against him was so intense that a demon once attempted to strangle him. Through the Sign of the Cross, however, Anthony never failed to put Satan

to flight. By his glorious victories over hell, the saint obtained the privilege of shielding or succoring souls from the attacks of Satan.

A certain woman suffered unspeakably from the wicked enemy, who continually urged her to commit suicide. Finally, she had recourse to Saint Anthony. The saint appeared to her and gave her a little piece of parchment on which was written the following prayer: —

Behold the Cross of the Lord!
Flee, ye adversaries!
The Lion of the tribe of Juda,
The Root of David, has
conquered. Alleluia.

On presenting this parchment to the woman, St. Anthony advised her to carry it on her person. She did so, and was soon delivered from the terrible temptation.

As a dog fears the stick with which it has been beaten, so does Satan fear the Sign of the Cross, for by the Cross he has been conquered. The above

prayer with the Sign of the Cross is highly recommended against the attacks of Satan.

Blessed in Death

St. Anthony granted himself no rest. He was unremitting in his zeal, preaching by day and hearing confessions till late at night. His body, enfeebled by long fasts, finally succumbed to the strain. Anthony knew and felt that his end was drawing near, and longed to spend some time in solitude alone with God, in preparation for death.

With two companions, Brother Luke and Brother Roger, Anthony now set out for Campietro, a small village about three leagues from Padua. There, at the beginning of June, 1231, he was received by his friend Tiso, as if he were an angel from heaven. Tiso immediately built three cells from the trunks and branches of large walnut trees, one for Anthony, and one for each of his companions. This was to be the last earthly dwelling of the wonder-

worker. Shut up day and night in his narrow cell, he applied his heart and mind to heavenly contemplation.

On the thirteenth of June, about midday, when Anthony was taking his frugal repast with his companions, he suddenly sank fainting to the floor. The friars lifted him in their arms and laid him on a bed of branches. Anthony, realizing that his end was near, longed to be carried to Padua, to the monastery of the Friars Minor, there to die, assisted and surrounded by his brethren. His two companions placed him on a cart and set out. By the time they reached the gates of the city, however, Anthony had grown so weak that they feared to proceed farther, lest he should die on the way. Therefore they carried him to Arcello, the monastery of the Poor Clares nearby, where three or four Franciscans lived. With sentiments of profound humility, Anthony once more confessed his faults and received absolution, and then with inexpressible joy intoned in a clear, melodious voice his favorite hymn in honor of the Blessed Mother of God, "O glori-

Blessed death of St. Anthony

osa Domina! – Hail, O glorious Queen!"

Anthony's eyes remained fixed on an invisible object which captivated his attention. "What do you see, brother?" asked one of his companions.

"I see my God," responded the dying saint.

Holy Viaticum and extreme unction were administered to him to strengthen him for the final combat and to purge

away the last stains from his soul. For about half an hour he was silent; then, as if falling asleep, he yielded up his angelic soul, to be escorted by his beloved Mother Mary to the throne of Jesus, for whose sake he had spent his life in prayer, labor and toil. It was evening of June 13, 1231.

Glorified after His Death

The Friars Minor resolved to keep the death of the saint a secret until after his burial. They feared the crowds of people would be too great, and a tumult might ensue. But it was not God's will that those precious remains should be interred secretly. In less than an hour the sad news had spread, and the whole city of Padua knew of it. Little children ran through the streets crying "Anthony is dead!" This news, proclaimed by innocent children, filled the people with grief. Storekeepers abandoned their shops and workmen left their employment. Some ran into the streets and asked where the saint had died. Being told at Arcello, men,

women and children hastened to the spot. With sobs and tears they pressed forward, longing to gaze once more on him who had been the spiritual father of the inhabitants of Padua.

Several religious houses disputed the possession of his precious relics. The Poor Clares begged to keep them because he had died in their convent. The religious of St. Mary Major's Convent claimed and obtained the body because Anthony had expresed the wish to be buried there.

An immense procession started from the episcopal palace, led by the bishop, who himself wished to perform the last rites of the Church over the humble Franciscan who had been so ardent a defender of her doctrine. The body of the saint was carried to Padua on the shoulders of dignitaries and magistrates to the church of St. Mary Major. The entire route of the procession was strewn with flowers, and astounding miracles took place: "The blind saw, the lame walked, the dumb spoke." The bishop officiated at the solemn fu-

neral ceremonies and sealed the tomb of the saint.

Scarcely had the tomb been sealed when it became the object of many pilgrimages — the scene of multiplied wonders, so that the bishop solicited the Holy See to bestow the honors of canonization upon Anthony. The process was begun, and completed in about six months. By an exception unusual in the history of the Church, the servant of God was solemnly canonized less than one year after his death by Pope Gregory IX, on May 30, 1232. The Pontiff intoned the *Te Deum*, then the antiphon, *O Doctor optime*, thus publicly saluting the eminent doctor, the champion of the Incarnate Word, the defender of the Real Presence, the apostle of Mary's prerogatives, the wonder-worker and saint.

Both parents of St. Anthony were present at the ceremonies of his canonization — a singular instance in the history of saints. Happy mother, who could count her son among her protectors in heaven, and behold all the

people render him such honor! Happy father, so visibly blest by God!

Sick persons who merely touched the coffin were instantly healed; also many who, prevented by the crowd, could not enter the church. The blind received their sight, the dumb recovered their speech and the lame were cured of their infirmities.

But good St. Anthony was not satisfied with curing bodily ailments; sometimes when guilt-laden sinners asked to be cured of physical ills, he let them wait until they had made their peace with God, and then cured them instantly. Soon the crowds of penitents became so great that the Friars alone were not able to hear all the confessions. Thus, indeed, was "his tomb made glorious."

The Shrine of St. Anthony

Immediately after the blessed death of St. Anthony, throngs of pilgrims besieged his tomb in St. Mary's Church, from which streams of grace and countless favors seemed to flow. Soon Padua

and the whole of northern Italy welcomed the plan proposed by their bishop to build a more worthy church in honor of the saint. The invasion of the bloodthirsty Etzel and his troops in 1238, however, delayed the progress of the new basilica considerably. After the invaders had been driven out in 1256, the people labored with renewed zeal, so that in 1263 the body of the saint could be translated to its new resting place.

St. Bonaventure, the minister-general of the Friars Minor, was present at the translation of the body. On opening the coffin it was found that, though the body had crumbled to dust, the tongue was intact and retained its natural fresh color. Moved by the sight of this miracle, St. Bonaventure exclaimed: "O blessed tongue, which always blessed the Lord and caused others also to bless Him! Now it is evident how highly thou wert esteemed by God!"

The basilica was in the form of a Roman Cross. In the left arm of the Cross was the special chapel of Saint

Anthony in which his precious relics were venerated. But this simple chapel did not long satisfy the devotion and taste of the Paduans. Therefore they built for him a gorgeous chapel, to which in 1350 the venerated remains were carried in a silver casket, amid great pomp and rejoicing.

This is the first shrine in honor of St. Anthony, who has since become the saint of the whole world. To know him means to love him. He seems to have unlimited access to the treasures of God's grace and dispenses them to all who are in spiritual or temporal need.

A traveling journalist made these remarks: "One immediately perceives that this is the shrine of the saint by its grandeur and beauty and by the immense riches lavished upon it. The walls of the interior are decorated with bas-reliefs sculptured in marble, representing, in more than a hundred pictures, the principal events of the saint's life. These figures are genuine works of art."

Several times the original basilica was almost reduced to ruins, but each

Basilica erected in Padua by enthusiastic clients to the honor of St. Anthony

time it was rebuilt. As it now stands, the edifice measures 374 feet in length and 179 feet in the transept. Nine cupolas surmount the basilica, of which the largest is 123 feet high and 955 feet in circumference. The basilica embodies not less than twenty-one small chapels and altars. By far the most beautiful parts of the church are the chapels in the transept and that of St. Anthony itself. The main altar and the altar in St. Anthony's chapel are adorned with rare gems and jewels.

The basilica of St. Anthony is a house of prayer, a sanctuary of grace, where all who seek aid find it. The people love St. Anthony. Everywhere churches and shrines are dedicated to him; there is scarcely a church or chapel throughout the world without a statue or picture of the saint, or a Catholic home without his image.

The seven hundredth anniversary of St. Anthony's death was commemorated by a Jubilee year extending from his feastday June 13, 1931, to June, 1932, the anniversary of his canonization, in the celebration of which the en-

tire Catholic world was invited to participate. Countless pilgrims visited his tomb in the magnificent basilica of Padua to pay honor to this seraphic apostle of charity, and his numberless shrines throughout the world were thronged with fervent clients, giving witness that today, more than ever, St. Anthony is "the saint of the whole world."

Pius XI, then gloriously reigning as Pope, encouraged and approved the festivities, both ecclesiastical and civic, which were arranged in honor of the saint, and himself chose as the centenary motto the significant phrase: "*Per Antonium ad Jesum!* — Through Anthony to Jesus!" The Holy Father expressed the earnest hope that henceforth the devotion to St. Anthony might assume a more spiritual nature and become less material and self-seeking than it had been hitherto. He wished his spiritual children not only to seek relief in their necessities, but also to imitate him in the practice of Christian virtue, especially in his fervent practice of the two great com-

mandments — the love of God and the love of neighbor. Could the blessed tongue of the saint, still preserved incorrupt, give utterance to the desires of his heart, this would doubtless also be his message to our age, grown so cold in the practice of charity.

A Doctor of the Church

After reading of the glories of St. Anthony, it would seem that nothing more could be added to the luster of his name. Yet in the early part of 1946, the Sacred Congregation of Rites conferred on him a new honor by declaring him a "Doctor of the Church." This title is given only to those saints who possess learning to such an eminent degree that the whole Church is benefited by their teachings. St. Anthony is the 29th saint to be so honored. Though only so recently conferred on the saint, his eminent worthiness to receive this title was already recognized by Pope Gregory IX, who, as mentioned, in the canonization process in 1232, saluted him with the words: "O Doctor op-

time," the Magnificat Antiphon of Vespers in the Office of a Doctor of the Church. All his clients rejoice in this new recognition of the merits of their beloved saint, whose learning has brought glory to the Church and salvation to souls.

From the Office of Doctors

JESUS, Eternal Truth sublime,
Through endless years the same,
The crown of those who through all time
Confess Thy holy Name!

Thy suppliant people, through the prayer
Of Thy blest saint forgive.
For his dear sake Thy wrath forbear,
And bid our spirits live.

All objects of our vain desire,
All earthly joys and gains,
To him were but as filthy mire,
And now with Thee he reigns.

Thee, Jesus, his all-gracious Lord,
Confessing to the last,
He trod beneath him Satan's fraud,
And stood forever fast.

In holy deeds of faith and love,
In fastings and in prayers,
His days were spent, and now above,
Thy heavenly feast he shares.

Then for his sake Thy wrath lay by,
And hear us while we pray,
And pardon us, O Thou Most High,
On this his festal day.

All glory to the Father be,
And sole Incarnate Son,
Praise, Holy Paraclete, to Thee,
While endless ages run. Amen.

℣. The Lord guided the just in right paths.
℟. And showed him the kingdom of God.

LET US PRAY

O God, may the devout commemoration of Thy blessed Confessor and Doctor Anthony fill Thy Church with joy. May her children, with the constant help of spiritual powers, become worthy to enjoy everlasting bliss: through Our Lord....

Prayers in Honor of St. Anthony

Nine Tuesdays

Tuesday is especially dedicated to Saint Anthony. In many Franciscan churches, devotions in honor of St. Anthony are held on this day, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

A Novena of Tuesdays in honor of St. Anthony is made in the following manner: On nine successive Tuesdays a visit is made to a church, where prayers are offered to the saint for one's needs. If one cannot visit a church, the devotion is performed at home, if possible before a picture or statue of St. Anthony, and the novena may be concluded by going to confession and receiving Holy Communion.

This devotion has been frequently rewarded in a striking manner. It is a laudable custom to make, at the beginning of a novena, a firm resolution to practice diligently one or other of the following virtues in which St. Anthony most excelled: humil-

ity, obedience, patience, meekness, charity, modesty, self-denial, mortification, love of God.

Thirteen Tuesdays or Sundays in Honor of St. Anthony

The faithful who spend some time in devout meditation or prayers, or who perform some other acts of piety in honor of Saint Anthony of Padua, on Tuesday or Sunday of any week, with the intention of so doing for thirteen Tuesdays or Sundays without interruption, may gain: A plenary indulgence on the usual conditions ("Raccolta," 530). Many persons make the "Thirteen Tuesdays" (or Sundays) immediately preceding the feast of St. Anthony, June 13.

St. Anthony's Bread for the Poor

One of the greatest delights of St. Anthony while still on earth was to distribute bread to the poor. Devotion to St. Anthony has frequently taken the form of promising and giving alms to the poor in his name. Countless favors have been received after such promises. The alms may be given to any charity one chooses.

Petition

To you we have recourse, most powerful worker of miracles, in whose heart burned a sublime fire of charity toward God and the poor. To you, who were deemed worthy to hold in your arms the Infant Jesus, who chose to be born poor; to you, full of confidence, we have recourse, asking that you pray the good Jesus to have compassion on us in our great tribulations. Oh, obtain for us the favor which we humbly implore... (here mention the favor desired). If you obtain it for us, O glorious St. Anthony, we will offer you an alms for bread for the poor, whom you loved so greatly on earth.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father.

Thanksgiving

O Glorious worker of miracles, father of the poor, who, wondrously gifted with a heart full of compassion for the miseries of the unfortunate, by a miracle laid open the heart of a miser steeped in avarice. You who offered our prayers to Our Lord and obtained a hearing, accept as a proof of our gratitude the alms we lay at your feet for the relief of those in misfortune. May it turn to the benefit of ourselves and of the

suffering. Hasten with your usual kindness to help us in our temporal necessities, and still more to provide for our spiritual needs, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Novena

To make a novena in honor of Saint Anthony, one may say any prayer or perform any act of devotion, such as a visit to a church, but the prayer or good work should be offered on nine consecutive days. When making a novena, it is well also to promise a charitable offering for the poor. In no other way can so many blessings be obtained as by performing works of mercy.

Any of the following prayers may be used for a novena.

Prayer in Any Necessity or Affliction before an Image of St. Anthony

We salute you, O glorious favorite of God, and bow our guilty heads before you in humble reverence, while we raise our sad hearts full of hope toward heaven and you:

for He who put Himself in your arms will now fill your hands with all we ask of you. Give us, then, what we desire, and we will proclaim your power and glorify Him who so blessed you. Amen.

Efficacious Prayer

Great St. Anthony, I congratulate you on all the prerogatives with which God has favored you beyond all His saints. By your powerful intercession death is disarmed, and by your light, error is dissipated. They whom malice strives to crush receive by your assistance that solace so much desired; the lepers, the sick and the lame obtain complete health by your power; storms and tempests are stilled at your command, the captive's chains are broken by your intervention. Through your help, lost articles are found. All who invoke you with confidence are freed from the perils which threaten them; in a word, there is no difficulty over which your power and bounty do not extend.

O St. Anthony, powerful intercessor, by all these graces which heaven has given you, I supplicate you to take paternal care of my soul and my body, of my affairs and of my

whole life, being assured that there is nothing in the world that can injure me so long as I am under the protection of such a patron and protector. Present my needs and desires to the Father of mercies, to the God of every consolation, that by your merits He may deign to strengthen me in His service, console me in afflictions, deliver me from evils, or at least give me strength to bear them for my greater sanctification. I ask these graces for myself and for those who are in the same dangers. Amen.

Litany of St. Anthony

For private use

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
God, the Father of heaven,*
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Spirit,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Holy Mary, Virgin Immaculate,†
St. Anthony of Padua,

*Have mercy on us.
†Pray for us.

St. Anthony, great lover of God,*
St. Anthony, faithful follower of Christ,
St. Anthony, most zealous apostle,
St. Anthony, martyr in desire,
St. Anthony, teacher of true wisdom,
St. Anthony, harbinger of grace,
St. Anthony, converter of sinners,
St. Anthony, extirpator of vices,
St. Anthony, guide of the erring,
St. Anthony, terror of the demons,
St. Anthony, safety of the perishing,
St. Anthony, consoler of the afflicted,
St. Anthony, helper of the unfortunate,
St. Anthony, father of the poor,
St. Anthony, refuge of the sick,
St. Anthony, lily of virginity,
St. Anthony, model of all virtues,
St. Anthony, performer of miracles,
St. Anthony, help of all who invoke you,
Be merciful, Spare us, O Lord.
Be merciful, Graciously hear us, O Lord.
From all evil,†
From all sin,
From all dangers of soul and body,
From all snares of the devil,
From pestilence, famine and war,
From eternal death,
Through the merits of St. Anthony,
Through his zeal for the conversion
of sinners,

*Pray for us.
†Deliver us, O Lord.

Through his desire for the crown
of martyrdom,*
Through his fatigues and labors,
Through his preaching and teaching,
Through his tears of penance,
Through his patience and humility,
Through his glorious death,
Through the number of his wonderful deeds,
In the day of judgment,
We sinners,†
That Thou wouldst bring us to true penance,
That Thou wouldst grant us patience in
our trials,
That Thou wouldst grant our petitions,
That Thou wouldst enkindle the fire of
divine love within us,
That Thou wouldst favor us with the protection and intercession of Saint Anthony,

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
of the world, Spare us, O Lord!
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world, Graciously hear us, O Lord!
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of
the world, Have mercy on us!
Christ, hear us!
Christ, graciously hear us!

V. Pray for us, St. Anthony,
R. That we may be made worthy of the
promises of Christ,

*Deliver us, O Lord.
†We beseech Thee, hear us.

LET US PRAY

Almighty and eternal God, who didst glorify Thy faithful confessor, Anthony, with the perpetual gift of working miracles, graciously grant that what we confidently seek through his merits we may surely receive by his intercession. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer to Find a Lost Article

O perfect imitator of Jesus, who received the special privilege of restoring lost things, I ask of you that I may find... which has been lost, if such be the will of God. At least I ask quiet of mind and peace of conscience, the loss of which has afflicted me more than my material loss. To these favors add another, which is to keep me faithful in the possession of the true goods: in a word, that no hostile force may make me lose God or separate me from God, to whom be honor and thanksgiving now and forever. Amen. Our Father and Hail Mary (five times).

A Prayer of Petition

O wondrous St. Anthony, glorious by reason of the fame of your miracles, who had the happiness of receiving in your arms our blessed Lord under the guise of a little child,obtain for me of His bounty this favor which I desire with all my heart. You who were so gracious to poor sinners, regard not the lack of merit on the part of him who calls upon you, but consider the glory of God, which will be exalted once more through you, to the salvation of my soul and the granting of the petition which I now make with such ardent yearning.

As a pledge of my gratitude, I beg you to accept my promise to live more agreeably to the teachings of the Gospel, and to be devoted to the service of the poor whom you always loved so much; bless this my resolution and obtain for me the grace to be faithful thereto even until death. Amen.

An indulgence of 300 days, once a day. A plenary indulgence once a month, on the usual conditions, for the daily recitation of this prayer. "Raccolta," 532.

The Miraculous Responsory of St. Anthony

One of the most efficacious prayers to St. Anthony is the "Responsory." It was composed by St. Bonaventure who, filled with admiration for the great saint, condensed into a few words the countless graces which St. Anthony grants to his pious clients. Ever since his time, it has been chanted at the saint's tomb at Padua. Devout pilgrims often ask the Friars to recite it for a special intention. It is recommended in any necessity.

If, then, thou seekest miracles,
Death, error, all calamities,
The leprosy and demons flee,
The sick, by him made whole, arise.

The sea withdraws and fetters break,
And withered limbs he doth restore,
While treasures lost are found again,
When young or old his help implore.

All dangers vanish from our path,
Our direst needs do quickly flee;
Let those who know repeat the theme:
Let Paduans praise St. Anthony.

The sea withdraws, etc.

To Father, Son let glory be,
And Holy Ghost eternally.

The sea withdraws, etc.

V. Pray for us, O blessed Anthony,

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

Let Thy Church, O God, be gladdened by the solemn commemoration of blessed Anthony, Thy Confessor: that she may evermore be defended by Thy spiritual assistance and merit to possess everlasting joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

An indulgence of 300 days, once a day. A plenary indulgence once a month, on the usual conditions, if this responsory, together with its versicle and prayer, be said daily. "Raccolta," 531.